A SERMON,

PREACHED

At the CATHEDRAL CHURCH

AT

NORWICH,

On THURSDAY *Nov.* 29. 1739.

Being the Day appointed by Proclamation for a GENERAL THANKSGIVING to Almighty God for the signal Successes of the present Year.

By JAMES WELTON, *B. D.*

Head-Master of the FREE-SCHOOL at *NORWICH*,

AND

Chaplain to the Right Honourable the LORD KEEPER of the GREAT SEAL of *Great-Britain*.

NORWICH:

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[Price Six-Pence.]

1609/2198.

NORWICH. At a COURT *of* MAYORALTY, *held the First of December*, 1759.

ORDERED, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Mr. WELTON, for his excellent Sermon preached on *Thurſday* laſt, being the Day of public Thankſgiving, and that he be deſired to print the ſame: And the Right Worſhipful NOCKOLD TOMPSON, Eſq; Mayor, and JOHN PRESS, Eſq; are deſired to acquaint Mr. WELTON herewith.

By the COURT,

WRIGHT.

To the RIGHT WORSHIPFUL the

MAYOR,

The SHERIFFS, and the ALDERMEN,

Of the CITY of *NORWICH.*

GENTLEMEN,

THIS Diſcourſe had the good Luck to be deliver'd on a Day, when all Men were in Good-Humour with every Thing about them. No wonder therefore, if it met with ſome Degree of Approbation, whether it deſerv'd it, or not. For may not Joy and Exultation, as well as any other Paſſion, miſlead the Judgment?

However, as you were pleaſed, in a Manner, to command it to be made public; I eſteem it a Point of Decency to ſubmit to your Authority. And if, by any Thing ſuggeſted in this Sermon, I ſhou'd be ſo fortunate, as to add but the leaſt Degree of Increaſe to the Portion of Benevolence, which exiſts in the World at preſent, I ſhall think myſelf very amply rewarded, and am, with great Reſpect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt obliged, and

Moſt obedient

Humble Servant,

JAMES WELTON.

NORWICH SCHOOL,
Dec. 12, 1759.

To the RIGHT WORSHIPFUL the

MAYOR,

The SHERIFFS, and the ALDERMEN,

Of the CITY of NORWICH.

GENTLEMEN,

Norwich School,
Dec. 12, 1759.

JAMES WELTON.

The 29th Chapter of the 1st Book of CHRONICLES, Verſes the 11th, 12th, and 13th.

11. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power and the Glory, and the Victory and the Majeſty: for all that is in the Heaven and in the Earth, is Thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all.*

12. *Both Riches and Honour come of Thee, and Thou reigneſt over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all.*

13. *Now therefore, Our God, we thank Thee, and praiſe thy Glorious Name.*

THE Majeſty and Authority of God are here repreſented to us, with as much Sublimity and Magnificence, as Language can expreſs; and no Wonder, as the Words I have read to you, are an Effuſion of Eloquence, from the Mouth of the Holy DAVID; when his Mind was overflowing with Gratitude, for the many Deliverances and Victories God had

 beſtowed

beſtowed upon him, and his Imagination moreover warm'd and tranſported with the Idea of the Building he had projected for the Honour of the Supreme Being.

To this End, he had aſſembled his People, who were ſtanding round him with Silence and Attention. He recounts to them the various Materials he had provided for this Purpoſe; he particularly deſcribes them; and they are exceedingly numerous, and very ſplendid; of great Elegance and immenſe Value: But ſtill not ſatisfied, the pious Prince calls upon his People for their farther Aid, and Contributions, in order to render the Temple as auguſt as poſſible. He requires this of them, as a Teſt of their Gratitude for the many National Bleſſings they had received at the Hands of God, whoſe Protection they had ſo remarkably experienced, and in order to excite in their Hearts, a proper Senſe of God's Goodneſs to them, their pious King breaks forth, into the ſublime Rapture, contain'd in my Text; which is expreſſed with ſo much Grandeur, both of Style and Sentiment, that I am ſure you will excuſe me, if I repeat it once more. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory and the Majeſty: for all that is in the Heaven and in the Earth, is Thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of Thee, and Thou reigneſt over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all. Now therefore, Our God, we thank Thee, and praiſe thy Glorious Name.*

THE 11th and 12th Verſes, contain in them as many Propoſitions, as there are ſingle Qualities attributed to God; but as they are

are ſeparately affirm'd of God, they may all of them be collected together, and will then amount to this important Truth, That God ruleth over All; or that there is a Providence that governeth the World. Which ſhall be the firſt Head of my Diſcourſe; and under my ſecond, I ſhall ſet before you the Duty we are under to give Praiſe and Thankſgiving to Almighty God, for the Mercies we have received under his Protection; which is pointed out to us by the 13th Verſe; *Now, therefore, Our God, we thank Thee, and praiſe thy Glorious Name.*

(1ſt.) THEN I am to ſhew you, that God ruleth over all, or, that there is a Providence that governeth the World.

WOULD the Princes of this World, for a while turn their Ears from their Flatterers, and ſtudy ſeriouſly to know themſelves, they wou'd ſoon learn, how weak a Creature Man is, in whatever Situation he may be, if the ſupreme Governor of the World be their Adverſary. Whatever their Imaginations may ſuggeſt to them, concerning their Greatneſs and their Power, the Religious DAVID, who was a Prince, as well as they, wou'd convince them, that their Greatneſs and their Power, are but little better than Dreams; that theſe Properties belong not to Man, but to God, and that He is the Ruler among the People. *Thine is the Greatneſs and the Power*, ſays Holy DAVID, and ſo on, *&c.* which, according to the uſage of Language, amounts to this; Thine, and Thine only. When MOSES, tho' commanded by God, was yet afraid to approach the Preſence of PHAROAH, and diffident of Succeſs, timerouſly enquired, who, he ſhould ſay, had ſent him; the Anſwer was, *I am*; as much as to ſay, the only exiſting Being; by this

Deſcription, God alone cou'd be meant: for as for Man, or the greateſt of Men, what is He? whoſe Life was but of Yeſterday, and To-morrow, if it ſo pleaſes God, he may be no more? And as Man's Exiſtence is, ſo is his Greatneſs and his Power, merely permiſſive, and dependant. The Powers that Man hath, all the Faculties of his Mind, and the Strength of his Body, were originally given him by God; and is it to be conceived, that a created Being, or any Combination of them, ſhould be more powerful than God, who made them? Can it be imagin'd, that a Being of infinite Wiſdom, ſhould give Exiſtence to Powers, that might overule his Will, with Impunity, and without Controul. Such a Suppoſition wou'd be abſurd. The Powers therefore that are upon the Earth, are all under the Direction, of the Great Being, who controuls the Univerſe by his Wiſdom and by his Power. He who believes, that this material Syſtem, ſo juſtly admir'd for its Order and Regularity, was originally created by God, cannot ſure think it difficult for the ſame Almighty Hand to govern and ſupport it. Can it be thought incredible that the Winds and the Seas ſhould obey the Author of Nature, who form'd them? Or is it probable, that thoſe unruly Elements ſhould be left to themſelves to act at large, and exert their Violence without Reſtraint? To the Sea, God hath ſaid, *hitherto ſhalt Thou go, and no farther*; And the Winds and Storms, we read, *are obedient to his Word.* Nor are thoſe Parts of the Creation, which ſeem to move on, in a Courſe eaſy and uninterrupted, left to themſelves, but are under the Guidance, and Direction of God. Should God withdraw his Hand but for a Moment, and ceaſe to pilot and conduct the Earth, which ſelf-ballanc'd, is ſailing in the Air, the World wou'd ſink into immediate Ruin and Deſtruction. And what hath been ſaid of the World in general, may be ſaid likewiſe of the Human

Body,

Body, in particular; in God we live, and move, and have our Being; And how exact, how exceedingly minute, muſt God's Care of us be? *when the very Hairs of our Head*, as the Goſpel aſſures us, *are all numbered?* And as the natural World is under the Influence and Direction of God, ſo is the moral World alſo, under his conſtant Government and Controul. And indeed, as Reaſon is what diſtinguiſhes Man moſt, in this World, are there not good Grounds to think, that the Mind of Man, will be particularly attended to by God, and conducted, or controul'd in its Operations, as there is Occaſion? When this Faculty puts us upon Actions of Benevolence and Goodneſs, there is a ſure Foundation of Hope, as well from Reaſon, as the Scripture, that God will aſſiſt, encourage, and ſtrengthen it. But when Men abuſe their rational Nature, and degenerate into Cruelty, Injuſtice and Oppreſſion; will not the moral Governour of the World, whoſe Glory it is to protect the Innocent, interpoſe, and defeat the Schemes of the Cruel and the Wicked? Many are the Devices of Man's Heart, but God's Counſel, that ſhall ſtand.

The formidable Potentate, whoſe Grandeur is built on the Poverty, the Slavery and the Miſery of his People; He who, in Imitation of his Anceſtors, was graſping at univerſal Empire, no otherwiſe to be obtain'd but by univerſal Murder and Oppreſſion; who wou'd inſolently trample on the Rights and Liberties of Mankind; who had ſent forth his Armies, with Revenge and Deſolation at the Head of them, to inſlave an innocent People, and lay waſte all before them; Hath not this ambitious Monarch met at length with an Adverſary, whom he little thought of, even the Lord of Hoſts? who hath made his numerous Armies to fly before the Faces of a few; cover'd him with Shame and Diſho-

nour

nour, and given him up to Remorſe and Indignation, amidſt the Laſhes of Ridicule, both at home and abroad, the Pangs of Diſtreſs and Indigence, and the Clamours of an injur'd and harraſs'd People?

GREAT as this Reſcue may appear, yet is this but a very partial View of the Wonders God hath wrought for us; to ſee them in their whole Extent, we muſt look round the Globe, and trace 'em in every Quarter of the habitable World; on the Land, and on the Sea, in the Eaſt and in the Weſt, in the North and in the South. If I do not enumerate to you the ſeveral Victories God hath bleſſed us with, it is, becauſe they are ſo many; and ſhould I ſingle out no particular Victory, this Reaſon might be given for it, that the Hand of God ſeems viſible in them all. But becauſe in the Orders for this Day's Solemnity, one Inſtance of our Succeſs, is particularly pointed out to us, it may be proper to dwell a little upon that, as what demonſtrates the Aid and Aſſiſtance of Heaven, moſt conſpicuouſly, and was, no Doubt, for that Reaſon, particularly recommended to our Thoughts, on this Occaſion.

WHETHER the Reduction of the Capital of *Canada*, be deciſive or no, ſo as to be productive of an elegible Peace, muſt reſt a while among the ſecret Counſels of God; if the Event of it be Peace, 'tis important indeed; and tho' this ſhould not be the Conſequence of it, yet was it ſo ſtrange and amazing, that it can no otherwiſe be accounted for, but by the Providence of God. It was unexpected; beyond the Hopes of the moſt Sanguine; nay, and in ſome Meaſure, even deſpaired of by the intrepid Commander himſelf, whom yet God Almighty inſpired to plan it; to our

Amazement

Amazement the Plan was executed; and how univerſally is it wiſhed, that this illuſtrious Inſtrument of Providence had liv'd to enjoy the Succeſs of it, and to receive the Honour and Reward of his Wiſdom, and Fortitude! So great a Loſs, hangs, as it were, like a Cloud, over our Proſperity, and intermixes no ſmall Degree of Melancholy, with the Triumph of this Day.

THAT uncommon Exertion of Force, in a defenſive War, hath done Honour to his Country, and will ſtand for ever memorable in it's Records. The Heights of mountainous Rocks were to be ſcal'd; Precipices ſteep and hazardous to be aſcended; all Order, in the mean Time, relax'd; Diſcipline, for a while, to ceaſe; hoſtile Obſtructions, notwithſtanding, to be remov'd; and a ſtrong Guard ſurmounted: Great as theſe Difficulties appear, they are to be conſider'd only, as ſo many perilous Steps up to Dangers ſtill more alarming; an Engagement with an Enemy well ſkilled in the Circumſtances of the Place of Battle, and far ſuperiour in Number. Here might we well aſk the Queſtion, and ſay with the Prophet HABAKUCK, *Behold, is it not of the Lord of Hoſts, that the People ſhould labour in the very Fire?* Ch. 1. V. 13. To increaſe our Aſtoniſhment, add to this, that, amidſt the firſt Vehemence of the Enemy, the *Britiſh* Force was reſerv'd; and how dreadful muſt be the Interval of this difficult Suſpence, to ſee Men falling on their right Hand, and on their left, and not be permitted yet, to oppoſe their Efforts? In this tremendous Approach fell their Leader, whom we this Day honour and lament: But God was ſtill with them, and the End was Victory. *Where now*, may we ſay with the Prophet, *is the Proud Man, who keepeth not at home, who enlargeth his Deſire as Hell, and is as Death, and cannot be ſatisfied, but gathereth unto him, all Nations, and heapeth unto him all People.*

Shall not all theſe take up a Parable againſt him, and a taunting Proverb againſt him, and ſay, Wo to him, that increaſeth that which is not his; How long? and to him that ladeth himſelf with thick Clay. Shall they not riſe up ſuddenly that ſhall bite Thee, and awake that ſhall vex Thee? and Thou ſhalt be for Booties unto them. Hab. c. 2. v. 5, 6, and 7.

Thus, by the Bleſſing of God, are our Enemies brought down, and fallen, but we are riſen and ſtand upright. *Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and Praiſe thy Glorious Name.* Which brings me to the ſecond Head of this Diſcourſe, which was to ſet before you, the Duty we are under, to render Praiſe and Thankſgiving to Almighty God, for the Mercies we have received, under his Protection.

We are aſſembled, this Day, in Obedience to the Authority of a King, who delights in the Proſperity of his People; We are called upon to rejoice with his Majeſty, for the uncommon Succeſs, and the Signal Victories, with which it hath pleaſed Providence to bleſs this Kingdom, and it's Allies, in various Parts of the World, and to join, with thoſe of his Majeſty, our unfeigned Praiſes and Thankſgivings, to the Sovereign Governour of the Univerſe, for theſe Bleſſings.

'Tis the Inſolence of Popery and Tyranny only, to delude the People, with imaginary Triumphs, and inſult God, with the Oſtentation and Mockery of Religion; But the Bleſſings we are now praiſing God for, are real; and the Victories, univerſally known and acknowledged. Our Gratitude to God therefore, ſhould be real alſo; and our Thanks, the ſincere Dictates of the Heart.

You

You have ſeen, how weak human Wiſdom is, and how feeble human Strength, in Competition with the Power of the Almighty, and how little Confidence is to be placed in them; the wiſeſt Councils may be diſconcerted, and the ſtrongeſt Armies be diſcomfited, at the Breath of his Diſpleaſure; every Thing that is Human muſt fall down before him, and do Homage to his Omnipotence. Of what Importance is it therefore, to ſecure the Friendſhip, and Protection of ſo great a Being? But how can we expect he ſhould go forth before our Armies, as He hath hitherto done, if we are ungrateful for the Protection we have received, and how can our Gratitude be thought ſincere, unleſs it be evidenc'd by a thorough Reformation, of our Lives, a deep Senſe of God's Favour to us, and a Steady Reſolution, in our ſeveral Situations of Life, to promote the Glory of God?

Not that any Evidence of our Sincerity, is needful to God, who ſees thro' all the Faculties of the Soul at once, and judges unerringly of the Integrity of the Heart; but ſuch Evidence is neceſſary and uſeful to Man, as we can no otherwiſe judge of the Sincerity of one another, but by external Actions.

'Tis Example that is wanted; Example, which hath more Authority over the Minds of the Generality of Men, than the ſtrongeſt Arguments, or the moſt perſuaſive Eloquence. And upon this Foundation it is, that we are commanded by our Bleſſed Saviour, *To let our Light ſhine before Men, that they may ſee our good Works, and glorify our Father, which is in Heaven.*

In the Introduction to this Diſcourſe, I obſerved to you, that the *Iſraelites*, on an Occaſion much like this, were aſſembled in the Preſence of their King, and that He propoſed to them the erecting of a Temple to the God of their Fathers. The Propoſal was conſented to with Alacrity and Joy; to this Purpoſe, their Iron, and

 their

their Brass, and their Silver, and their Gold, and their precious Stones, were brought together, for the Service of the House of God; Upon so clear a Demonstration of their Gratitude, the good King of *Israel* bursts forth into these Words, *I know, my God, that Thou triest the Heart, and hast Pleasure in Uprightness. As for me, in the Uprightness of my Heart, I have willingly offer'd all these Things: and now have I seen with Joy, thy People which are present here, to offer willingly, unto Thee.* On this Occasion, how cou'd the unthankful Hypocrite escape being discovered? or, if he did, how dearly did he pay for his Concealment? Again, on the Morrow of that Day, we read, *they sacrificed Sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt Offerings, even a Thousand Bullocks, a Thousand Rams, and a Thousand Lambs, with their Drink Offerings, and Sacrifices in abundance, for all* Israel; *and did eat and drink before the Lord with great Gladness.*

In Honour of the Piety of this Nation also, it may be said, that, by the Munificence of Parliament, a Temple hath been erected to the Honour of God, equal, if not superior, to any in the modern World, and, that fifty Structures, for the Worship of God, after a Course of Prosperity in War, were at once order'd to be raised, at the Expence of one single City; so that nothing of this Sort seems to be wanted there, or in any other Part of the Kingdom.

As for Sacrifices, God long since gave the World to know, by his Prophets, that *He wou'd have Mercy and not Sacrifice.* In the Room of Sacrifices, the Christian Religion hath introduc'd Charity; so much to it's Honour, and the Benefit of Man, that 'tis astonishing to see Men oppose or undervalue an Institution, which hath so highly improv'd the Happiness of Men, and so remarkably promoted the Glory of God. The Sacrifices which were

offer'd

offer'd by the *Iſraelites*, as you have heard, were expenſive and magnificent; but with regard to God, they were uſeleſs, and with reſpect even to Man, but of little Value. In a few Days, the Effects of them were no more; whereas the Effects of Chriſtian Charity are often permanent and laſting. The poorer Clergy, for Inſtance, to this Day, reap the Advantage of the Benevolence of the Crown, when, after Succeſs in a long War, it gave up it's Demands on the ſmall Revenues of the poorer Clergy, an Offering more acceptable to God, and more uſeful to Man, than all the Sacrifices of the *Iſraelites*; inaſmuch as the good Effects of it will continue for ever.

And how decent, how beautiful is a Spirit of Religion and Benevolence, in a State of Succeſs and Proſperity! And what can be a more natural Return to God, for National Bleſſings, than National Charity? and indeed, the Benevolence of this Age hath been ſuch, that it hath hardly been more kind, than ingenious, as it hath contrived Places of Refuge and Eaſement, for the various Afflictions of the Sons of Men, inſomuch that there is hardly a natural Evil, for which ſome Degree of Conſolation, hath not been provided.

From the great City the Example is ſpreading in the Country; ſomething here of this kind * hath been thought of, and ſet on Foot; may it go on and proſper, and be a laſting Monument of Gratitude, for the Mercies God hath vouchſafed us this memorable Year, in which it hath been projected. I am the more anxious on this Topic, becauſe I cannot help being perſuaded, that the uncommon Favour God hath of late ſhewn to this Nation, is to be imputed greatly, if not principally, to it's uncommon Charity and Benevolence. To what indeed it is ſtrictly and preciſely to be aſcribed, is not in Man, to pronounce with Certainty; but

* *A* County Hospital.

but this we are ſure of, that a Multitude of our Sins muſt have been cover'd, and we all know, what that Virtue is, which is ſaid to cover a Multitude of Sins. That we may have therefore a ſure Bulwark, in the Day of Danger, let this Evangelical Virtue be cultivated, as the Characteriſtic of the Chriſtian Religion, and be eſteem'd and honour'd among Men; in Confidence of this Truth, that he moſt promotes the Glory of God, who moſt, by his Power, his Riches, or his Wiſdom, contributes to the Happineſs of Men.

I will not detain you much longer; but I cannot cloſe this Diſcourſe, as the War is ſtill in its Progreſs, without obſerving to you, how abſurd it wou'd be to expect Succeſs from Heaven, unleſs we do all we can to contribute to it ourſelves. This hitherto hath been done, and every good Man muſt have obſerv'd with Pleaſure, the uncommon Spirit of Union and Harmony, that hath of late prevail'd amongſt all Orders of Men, to a Degree unknown in Hiſtory: All Party-Diſtinctions have been dropt, and Feuds and Animoſities, as it were, forgotten; we have ſeen and experienced the Advantage of it; let them therefore, from henceforward, be buried in Oblivion; never to riſe again, to diſturb our Peace, or perplex the Councils, of the amiable and patriot Prince, who preſides over us. The Union of his Subjects, will put Strength and Vigour into the King's Hands, which we are ſure will be exerted for the common Good, and ſuch as will, under the Bleſſing of God, make his Reign glorious, his Name illuſtrious in future Ages, and his Subjects happy and proſperous in this. Which God, of his infinite Mercy grant, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, from this Time forth for evermore.

FINIS.

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